

*Apr. 30 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2009*

American consumers, paving the way toward real, meaningful credit card reform. While Americans have a responsibility to live within their means and pay what they owe, credit card companies have a responsibility to set rules that are fair and transparent. The principles I have long supported would help ensure that these responsibilities are met: strong and reliable consumer protections, credit card forms and statements that have plain language in plain sight, tools that can help people make

an informed choice about what credit card to use, and beefed-up monitoring, enforcement, and penalties. And building on what we have achieved today, I will work with Congress in the weeks to come so that I can sign a credit card reform bill into law that upholds these principles and upholds the interests of the American people.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 627.

## Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Request for Funds to Enhance Capabilities to Combat the Global Influenza Outbreak

*April 30, 2009*

*Dear Madam Speaker:*

This week, as reports of the 2009 H1N1 flu outbreak around the world were made public, my Administration has been carefully monitoring the situation, coordinating State and local responses, assessing the risks here in the United States, and cooperating with international organizations and health officials around the globe.

Out of an abundance of caution, I asked the Congress earlier this week to consider a proposal to provide \$1.5 billion to enhance our Nation's capability to respond to the potential spread of this outbreak. As the attached detailed request reflects, these funds should be provided with maximum flexibility to allow us to address this emerging situation. Among the uses of these funds could be: supplementing anti-viral stockpiles; developing a vaccine; supporting monitoring, diagnostic, and public

health response capabilities; assisting international efforts to stem this outbreak and to address related international needs.

Already, Federal, State, and local public health officials are working day and night to respond quickly and effectively wherever cases of this flu may be found and to prepare the entire country for any potential progression of this outbreak.

I urge the Congress to act expeditiously in considering this important request, the details of which are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 1.

## Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters

*May 1, 2009*

*The President.* All right. Well, thank you, everybody. It's been just over a week since we've learned about this novel strain of the flu virus that's now affected people in at least 11 countries—or at least 11 of our States as well as 11 other countries. And throughout this process, my top priority has been the health

and the safety of the American people. And to that end, we've closely monitored the situation.

I am extraordinarily proud of the work that's been done by the Department of Health and Human Services, as well as the Department of Homeland Security and the CDC. We've got

Dr. Richard Besser here, as well as Janet Napolitano; they've been really leading the charge. We've now brought in the cavalry with Secretary Sebelius.

We're obviously focused on what needs to be done immediately: identifying and mitigating cases of H1N1 in the United States; prepositioning antiviral treatments for those who are infected and making sure that they are distributed appropriately around the country; providing clear guidance as well as the best science to our State and local officials as they move forward; and speaking clearly to the American people, as I did the evening of the news conference, about the mitigation steps that they personally can take.

But we also need to prepare for the long term, since we know that these kinds of threats can emerge at any moment. Even if it turns out that the H1N1 is relatively mild on the front end, it could come back in a more virulent form during the actual flu season. And that's why we are investing in our public health infrastructure. We've had discussions about the production of vaccines for—in anticipation of the flu season. And we've made sure that all our agencies here are coordinating: that they have appropriate action plans; that we, for example, are working with the Department of Education to provide clear guidelines for school closures; that we are working with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, for example, to ensure that businesses are supportive of their hourly workers who need to stay home but may be worried about losing their jobs because they don't have sick leave, making sure that they are cooperating in what is going to be an overarching effort; discussions with our Secretary of State as well as our Ambassador to the United Nations about how we're going to respond to potential requests from other countries for assistance in dealing with this issue.

Overall, I'm very pleased with the progress that we've made. I think that those who have been on top of this have done an extraordinary job. I'm optimistic that we're going to be able to manage this effectively, but we still have more work to do, and I'm glad I've got such a great team doing it. And I want to make clear to everybody—and the reason I brought this Cabinet

meeting together is—that we are taking this very seriously and we will take every single step that's necessary to make sure that the American people are safe.

One last point I want to make, because this was actually raised during this meeting: somebody asked, "Why is this different from other flus?" We don't know for certain that this will end up being more severe than other seasonal flus that we have. It's been noted, I think, before that you have over 36,000 die on average every year from seasonal flus; you have 200,000 hospitalizations.

It may turn out that H1N1 is—runs its course like ordinary flus, in which case we will have prepared, and we won't need all these preparations. The reason that people are concerned is—the scientists are concerned is this is a new strain. So what happens is, is that Americans and people around the world have not built up immunity in the same way that they've built up immunity to the seasonal flus that we're accustomed to. Those seasonal flus may change, mutate slightly from year to year, but they're all roughly in the same band. When you have a new strain, then potentially our immune systems can't deal with it as effectively. And there are indications that in Mexico, at least, what you saw were relatively young, healthy people die from these—from the H1N1, rather than people whose immune system is already compromised, older individuals, very small infants, and so forth.

So that's why we're taking it seriously. We have not yet seen those same kinds of fatalities here in the United States among young, healthy people with noncompromised immune systems, but we want to make sure that we're preparing appropriately.

So I just want everybody to be clear that this is why this is a cause for concern but not alarm. We are essentially ensuring that in the worst-case scenario we can manage this appropriately, government, working with businesses and individuals in the private sector, end up containing an outbreak and that we can, ultimately, get through this.

So thank you very much, everybody. Hope you guys have a great weekend.

*Supreme Court*

Q. What are you looking for in a Supreme Court nominee?

Q. Can you comment on the news about Justice Souter?

*The President.* No Supreme Court questions.

Q. No Supreme Court questions? What are you looking for in a nominee? *[Laughter]*

*The President.* Have a great weekend, guys.

Q. You too, Mr. President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:37 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Richard E. Besser, Acting Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Secretary of Homeland Security Janet A. Napolitano; Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius; Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton; and Ambassador Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

Remarks a Naturalization Ceremony for Active Duty Servicemembers  
May 1, 2009

*The President.* Thank you. Thank you so much. This is a lot of fun. This makes so much of the hard work we do worth it, to see this ceremony here today. It is my honor and my personal pleasure to be the first to address you as my fellow Americans. And welcome to your White House. Now, I know this day carries a lot of meaning not only for you, but for your family members and your fellow servicemembers who join you today.

Each of you has a unique story to tell about the journey that led you here. You hail from every corner of the Earth, from Southeast Asia to Central Europe, from West Africa to South America. Some of you came to this country as young children, because your parents wanted to give you a better life in the land of opportunity. Others traveled here as adults, enduring hardship and sacrifice to provide for your own families. But all of you have one thing in common: You're here because you have not merely chosen to live in this country, you've chosen to serve this country.

You're here for the same reason that Jeonathan Zapata is here. Jeonathan recently returned from serving as part of our efforts in Afghanistan. He actually helped man the 400,000th aircraft landing aboard the USS *Kit-ty Hawk*. And Jeonathan wanted to serve the country he considers his own, even though he was not yet a citizen, because America had been so good to him from the time he came here from Nicaragua as a child. "By serving in

the military," Jeonathan says, "I can also give back to the U.S."

So, Jeonathan, I'd like you to stand.

You're here for the same reason—you can sit down now, Jeonathan—*[laughter]*. You're here for the same reason that Chryshann Pierre is here. Chryshann, where are you? There you are. Chryshann is an Army Specialist returning from service in Iraq late last year. Originally, she joined the military because she wanted to provide stability for her three children. But then she discovered something she did not expect: She loves being in the Army. *[Laughter]* In fact, she even said that she loved basic training. Chryshann, you've got to be pretty tough to love basic training. *[Laughter]*

You all have your own stories—you can sit down, Chryshann—*[applause]*. You all have your own stories of how you came to this country. And you all have your own personal reasons for why you joined the military. But in the service that you render, in the sacrifices that each of you have made and will continue to make, in the commitment you've shown to your adopted nation, you're part of a larger story, America's story.

For more than two centuries, this Nation has been a beacon of hope and opportunity, a place that has drawn enterprising men and women from around the world who have sought to build a life as good as their talents and their hard work would allow. And generation after generation of immigrants have come